

Listing of Claims

1. (Previously Presented) A method of communicating within a network interface apparatus, the method comprising:
 - creating special frames for internal communication in a first part of the network interface apparatus, wherein the special frames each include:
 - an identifier that distinguishes the special frames from other frames passing through the network interface apparatus; and
 - physical layer device control information;
 - sending the special frames from the first part to a second part of the network interface apparatus through at least a media access controller of the network interface apparatus, wherein the second part includes a physical layer device;
 - identifying the special frames from among incoming frames incoming to the second part from the first part, wherein the identifying includes examining the incoming frames for the presence of the identifier; and
 - extracting the physical layer device control information from the special frames at the second part.
2. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the creating includes creating the special frames with the identifier in the position of a destination address, and wherein the identifying includes examining destination addresses of the incoming frames.
3. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 2, wherein the identifier is an otherwise unused IEEE address that is not used by a currently-operating device.
4. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, further comprising controlling the physical layer device using the physical layer device control information.

5. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the extracting the physical layer device control information includes changing the contents of memory registers of the second part.

6. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the first part includes an intermediate driver capable of creating the special frames.

7. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the sending the special frames includes passing the special frames through a device driver.

8. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, further comprising creating additional special frames for internal communication in the second part, the additional special frames including an additional identifier, and passing the additional special frames to the first part.

9. (Original) The method of claim 8, wherein the identifier and the additional identifier are in the form of destination addresses.

10. (Original) The method of claim 8, wherein the identifier and the additional identifier are the same.

11. (Previously Presented) A network interface apparatus comprising:
a network medium interface which includes a physical layer device;
a media access controller operatively coupled to the network medium interface;
and
a device driver arrangement operatively coupled to the media access controller,
the device driver arrangement including a device driver operatively configured to

communicate with the media access controller, and an intermediate driver operatively configured to communicate control information to the network medium interface;

wherein the intermediate driver and the network medium interface are operatively configured to communicate via special frames created for internal communication which include the control information.

12. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 11, wherein the network medium interface includes a second media access controller, ~~operatively coupled to the~~ and a physical layer device operatively coupled to the second media access controller.

13. (Canceled)

14. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 12, wherein the special frames are formatted to pass through the second media access controller as if the special frames were data frames.

15. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 11, wherein the special frames each include an identifier.

16. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 15,
wherein the identifier is placed in each of the special frames in a position corresponding to a destination address in a data frame; and
wherein the identifier has the same format as the destination address.

17. (Canceled)

18. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 16, wherein the identifier is an otherwise unused IEEE address that is not used by a currently-operating device.

19. (Original) The apparatus of claim 11, wherein the intermediate driver is operatively between the device driver and the media access controller.

20. (Original) The apparatus of claim 11, wherein the device driver is operatively between the intermediate driver and the media access controller.

21. (Previously Presented) A network interface apparatus comprising:
a network medium interface which includes a physical layer device;
a media access controller operatively coupled to the network medium interface;
a device driver operatively configured to communicate with the media access controller; and

means for controlling the physical layer device by passing control information through the media access controller,

wherein the means for controlling includes means for creating and sending special frames for internal communication which include the control information.

22. (Original) The apparatus of claim 21, wherein the network medium interface includes a second media access controller operatively coupled to the physical layer device.

23. (Cancelled)

24. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 21, wherein the means for creating the special frames for internal communication includes means for creating

frames that are treated by the media access controller as data frames.

25. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 21, wherein the network medium interface includes means for identifying the special frames.

26. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the special frames are sent only within the network interface apparatus, and are not passed outside the network interface apparatus.

27. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 11, wherein the network medium interface is configured to prevent passing of the special frames outside of the network interface apparatus.

28. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 21, wherein the network medium interface is configured to prevent passing of the special frames outside of the network interface apparatus.